

How to identify: Giant Hogweed

Scientific name: *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Origins: Caucasus Mountains in Eurasia

Habitat: Most common near water courses, but can also be found in derelict sites, and alongside railway banks and roads



Flowers

- Blooms from mid-May through July
- Numerous white flowers clustered in an umbrella-shaped head (Umbels)
- Can grow to a diameter of 60cm
- Holds up to 20,000 seeds per plant on the seed head

Leaves

- Large leaves growing up to 3m in length and 1.5m wide
- Sharply divided with irregular and very sharp edges
- Bristles on the underside



Stem

- The stem is green with purple blotches
- There are sharp white bristles, most notably at the base of the leaf stalks.
- It can grow between 1.5m and 5m tall



Common Hogweed

Common Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) is our native plant and looks very similar to Giant Hogweed.

These are some differences to look out for:

- **Flower Head** - much smaller, with fewer flowers growing on it
- **Leaves** - less divided segments and are slightly hairy
- **Stem** - continuously purple, narrower and has a groove
- **Size** - only grows to a height of 2m



The sap from Giant Hogweed contains furocoumarin which can cause skin to blister when exposed to sunlight (Phytophotodermatitis).
The blistering can recur for years.